

**ILLINOIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO
THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
MEETING MINUTES**

March 9, 2017

The Illinois Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights convened at the Ralph H. Metcalfe Federal Building at 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Floor 3, Chicago, IL 60604 to hear testimony regarding civil rights concerns related to voting rights in the state. Juan Carlos Linares chaired the meeting and performed the initial roll call of committee members present. This meeting was recorded and open to the public from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM EST.

State Advisory Committee Members Present:

- Juan Carlos Linares (Chair)
- Joanna Bohdziewicz-Borowiec
- Malik Nevels
- Evelyn Rodriguez
- Kendric Cobb
- Cindy Buys
- Trevor Copeland
- Tabassum Haleem
- William Howard
- Anne Wortham
- Richard Garcia
- Reyahd Kazmi

Commission Staff present:

- Mauro Morales, USCCR Staff Director
- David Mussatt, Supervisory Chief, Regional Programs Unit
- Melissa Wojnaroski, Civil Rights Analyst
- David Barreras, Civil Rights Analyst
- Ana Fortes, Civil Rights Analyst
- Carolyn Allen, Administrative Assistant
- Victoria Moreno, Civil Rights Intern
- Olivia Wilks, Civil Rights Intern
- Breanna Davidson, Civil Rights Intern

Members of the Public Present:

- Karen Wallace
- Steven Baskin
- Monika Mysliwicz
- Sarita Villarreal
- Guillermo Perez
- Andrew Goczkowski
- Ranjit Souri
- Joseph Tennial
- Elizabeth Temkin
- La Risa Lynch
- Vaughn Roland
- Barbara Barreno-Paschall
- Beth Awerkamp
- Audra Lewicki
- Kelly Bateman
- Jane Lau
- John Elliott
- Jerry James
- Ranjana Bhargava
- Shane Henson
- Lance Gough
- Claudia Sanchez
- Augustus Karisch
- Rudy Garrett
- Nicole Johnson
- Camille Williams
- Scott Tankersley
- Martin Castro
- Tara Orris
- Leif Anderson
- Frank Herrera
- Noah Praetz
- Abdelnasser Rashid
- Sarah Resnick
- Brian Gladstein

Meeting Notes/Decisions Made:

The Committee heard testimony from the following individuals according to the agenda noted:

Opening Remarks and Introductions (8:00-8:15am)

Legal and Academic Research on Voting Rights Panel (8:15-9:30am)

- Ruth Greenwood, Deputy Director of Redistricting, Campaign Legal Center
- Ami Gandhi, Director of Voting Rights and Civic Empowerment, Chicago Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Inc.
- Jacob H. Huebert, Senior Attorney, Liberty Justice Center
- Rebecca Glenberg, Senior Staff Attorney, American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois

Voting and Incarceration Panel (9:45-11:00am)

- Christina R. Rivers, PhD, Associate Professor, DePaul University Political Science Department
- Michelle Mbekeani-Wiley, Community Justice Staff Attorney, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
- Cara Smith, Policy Chief, Office of Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart
- Nasir Blackwell, Green ReEntry Program Coordinator, Inner-City Muslim Action Network
- Marlon Chamberlain, FORCE Organizer, Community Renewal Society

Language Access Panel (11:15am-12:30pm)

- Ryan Cortazar, Legal Fellow, Chicago Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Inc.

- Shobhana Verma, Director of South Asian Outreach Program, Chicago Board of Election Commissioners
- Verónica Cortez, Staff Attorney, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
- Andy Kang, Legal Director, Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Chicago

Voting Across Social Groups Panel (1:30-2:45pm)

- Cheryl Jansen, Public Policy Director, Equip for Equality
- Sharon Legenza, Executive Director, Housing Action Illinois
- Christian Diaz, former Executive Director, Chicago Votes
- Juan Thomas, Esq., Chair, Legal Redress Committee, NAACP Illinois State Conference
- Mary H. Schaafsma, Executive Director, League of Women Voters of Illinois

Government Perspectives Panel (3:00-4:15pm)

- Brent Davis, Director, Division of Election Operations, Illinois State Board of Elections
- David Orr, Cook County Clerk
- Karyn Bass Ehler, Chief of Civil Rights Bureau, Office of the Illinois Attorney General

Open Forum (4:15-4:45pm)

Closing Remarks (4:45-5:00pm)

Also invited to testify were the Kankakee County Clerk Bruce Clark and Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, who were both unable to attend.

Testimony focused on civil rights concerns on disparities in access to voting and discrimination based upon the race, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and age of the electorate. It also discussed challenges to voting facing the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated, Limited English Proficient individuals, individuals with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness.

At the conclusion of testimony given on each panel, Committee members had the opportunity to ask questions of the panelists.

No decisions were made and no votes taken. A transcript of the proceedings will be available and included with meeting records within 30 days.

Public Comment:

During the Open Forum session listed on the above agenda, the meeting was opened for comments from members of the public. During the session, testimony was received from:

- Brian Gladstein

Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting and to provide additional testimony either orally or in writing.

Written testimony from members of the public will continue to be accepted until April 10, 2017. For more information contact the USCCR Regional Programs Coordination Unit at 312-353-8311.

Adjournment:

Meeting Adjourned 5:00pm EST.